

DE Notes.2.doc

10-2-11

Ex-Com as a Big Con: a consensus-building device (e.g. to bring along the republicans, Dillon and McCone, to the blockade); real decisions made by JFK within much smaller groups

+ JCS

Ignorance of ExComm of Mongoose, and of invasion plans; and of PSALM clearance; and of prior consideration of possible missiles.

(McCone knew of Mongoose—hence (?) his expectation of missiles, unlike (?) his intell estimators; but did even he know of invasion plans?)

ExComm, in its ignorance, couldn't assess or even conceive of the importance of preventing US invasion as a SU aim, let alone, a or the principal aim. It looked like at least an effort to redress the strategic imbalance; but then, why was it done so covertly? And so urgently? Unless to make immediate use of it, say in Berlin. (Was this a motive at all? Has that ever come out—K intentions wrt Berlin, which he did say secretly he was about to reopen?)

F Those in the know about invasion plans, on the other hand, knew that the ExComm as a whole couldn't discuss this and that their corporate advice was worthless, even worse than useless (based on assumption that the SU was being more aggressive than it was).

Wouldn't an air attack inevitably have opened up the question of SU motives and revealed the prior invasion plans? Or not? Would JFK have really minded that coming out (or even Mongoose), since it would answer Republican claims that he was being too passive?

Gribkov: K wasn't thinking about Turkish missiles, as a major consideration (until RFK and Lippmann raised them?! And until he was looking for some face-saving cover for retreating!)

It was the tactical weapons—first revealed by Gribkov in Havana in 1992 (30 years later!) that were really addressed to, indeed critical to, defense of Cuba. Yet they weren't "used" as deterrent threats at all, even in the height of the crisis! Did any of the Sovs, starting with K, ever notice or comment on the implications of the FAILURE to disclose them? (Even the MRBMs weren't explicitly admitted until October 28: WHY NOT? Has that ever been explained?)

That meant, like the Doomsday Machine in Strangelove, the "worst of all worlds": a defense/deterrent that wasn't used to deter and would not have deterred, a "defense" that would lead to destruction of Cuba if not of the world (in other words, it should have been a pure bluff even if it was threatened as a deterrent: as TCS believed K would have recognized and acted upon by not sending warheads at all, **just as neither side should**



X

\* illegal

"I may..." TCS

2

suicidal / mass murders / unsuicidal

all this threat  
require change

(may be lying (if non-credible - or threats are

X

ever have implemented or permitted LOW—or thousands of warheads, scheduled for ground burst—even if they threatened that they existed! Or NATO FU!!! Or weapons without PALs, on ground or in subs.

mis-represented  
(10 Good)

OR NOT

X

There is the moral question of making threats of actions that would be immoral to carry out. (Forbidden by Catholic ethics, but widely accepted as morally justified, and instrumentally justified, especially as "necessity.") And the prudential question of threatening actions that would be insane, counterproductive, vastly destructive, to carry out (not only non-optimal, but suicidal, devastating to both and to neutrals. And in both cases, the risks of making preparations that make these threats more credible, but also more likely to be carried out even against the wishes of the leaders at the time.

v

X

Gribkov, p. 168: SU decision to seek a Fait Accompli (FA) contributed to the political capability, and even political pressure, on US president to respond forcefully: surprise, shock, furtiveness suggesting "guilty conscience," (doing something wrong, something legitimately to be blocked by violence), dangerousness. ALSO the necessary lying to the president; rage, potential for humiliation for being fooled and disregarded (especially, warnings: which actually came "too late"—which JFK could have been told by K, at some point); encouraging JFK to make a public warning, which greatly increased his commitment, his vulnerability to humiliation, loss of majority in Congress within a month (! After assurance by K he wouldn't do this, an assurance in line with their earlier intimate relationship). Why were Soviet diplomats at the UN and in DC kept in the dark, and led to deny missiles, even after Oct. 22 speech?

Q

Thus: Why was it a "crisis" at all? All above reasons, especially JFK's prior warning, encouraged precisely by K's assurances and secrecy (and followed by more deception, further increasing likelihood of a forceful reaction: though in truth JFK WAS inclined to forego force and accept, if not the presence of the missiles, at least a humiliating trade, altering the "appearance of balance of power—i.e. (JFK) the reality of power—toward parity" (as Gilpatric had denied a year earlier): just as K had expected.

OR  
warning

K's expectation would have been fully justified if he HAD been able to achieve real surprise, and a FA revealed after the election. But how could he really have believed that US intelligence wouldn't discover it? Especially with the absence of attempts to camouflage (he WAS successful in covering up transportation, more than US intell would have supposed, especially wrt Elint)! That struck me in my study; led to the hypothesis (Beschloss suggests: from Mikoyan, from me?) that he thought JFK would cooperate in concealing it, as K had done wrt U-2 until the shootdown! NOT UNREALISTIC! See PSALM!

X

But even with PSALM, it couldn't have been kept for weeks IF THE JCS AND CIA KNEW THAT JFK WASN'T IN THE PROCESS OF ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY THE MISSILES (JFK kept them hoping for that for a full week, but he couldn't have held them off longer than that without at least a blockade, i.e. without revealing the presence before the election. Note that the NYT did HAVE the info (i.e. someone

who?



leaked! WHO? Never revealed! Presumably military?! by October 21, before the speech; he could only hold them off from printing for a day. (Note JFK questions: "How long before this leaks?") *MRB - a week*

X Why not postpone the whole deployment until after the election? Jesus Christ, JFK might well have invaded **before** the election, by October 20! Given the buildup before that; and even without it. So K needed the SAMS—but they were above all to keep off U-2s: they were in too late, relative to the deployment! IF they had been operational before construction on the sites (seen Oct. 14)—maybe the FA would have succeeded! **He needed to have started the SAM deployment earlier; or delayed the construction of the sites (after delivering the missiles and warheads).** After all, they were operational (the MRBMs, not the IRBMs) well before the election November 6; by October 26? They could have been delayed starting by a week. When were SAMS all operational, especially near the sites?

*Homerick* It does point to my hypothesis: that K was HOPING that the missiles wouldn't be seen (unrealistic, "hare-brained") (Note that "we" didn't think he would be so reckless as to put them there at all—see NIE in February—but we certainly didn't imagine "hare-brained" belief that the palm trees of Cuba would protect them from overhead recon!) but that he was COUNTING ON (or further hoping) that JFK *was not*

*election*  
*error* I.e., as I figured in my study, that it was timed to be discoverable, at worst, during a several-week period when JFK would be reluctant to attack, after which they would be invulnerable. He wanted the period of visibility-while-vulnerable (no warheads, not operational) to occur just before the election (see Rostow memo; example of 1960; and see British calculations before election of 1956, again getting it just backwards: Ike was MORE enraged at attempted FA just before election, potentially embarrassing him. K feared doing it AFTER election—might be too late (NOTE: I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CLUE OF THIS IN 1962, OR EVEN IN 1964! NOR DID MOST OF EXCOMM), and anyway, he thought JFK would then act during that vulnerable period (or blockade).

? But the pressure on JFK (like Ike) was even greater before the election than after! (Imagine that DRV had deliberately attacked in Tonkin Gulf in August 1964 in the belief that LBJ would be too preoccupied to respond, or would want to keep it secret (which he could have, as well—or as ill—as JFK in 1962) (see silence on Israeli attack on Liberty in 1967, or on Iraqi use of gas at Halabja) during campaign: when reality would have been the opposite, McNamara (at least, if not LBJ) wanted to attack even when not sure there had been a DRV attack! (like Bush vs. Iraq)

(Compare Saddam's deliberate ambiguity about his cooperation with the inspectors: apparently not to give up all deterrence against the Iranians! (Though what good did delay do, since he was going to give the inspectors access eventually?) And his confidence that Bush wouldn't invade, apparently because he saw himself a potential ally of the US!) (But above all, HIS "doomsday machine" in 1990-91! Ask Ritter.) *Samuel*



X Was there a potential, at any stage, for Castro and Khrushchev to have revealed credibly the range and details of Mongoose operations? Didn't they have Mongoose penetrated?

X Wouldn't that have made it hard for JFK even to institute a blockade, even if K had made the deployment open and public from the start? Or deployed the tac nucs (alone), as a FA, then revealed them?! Why the MRBMs at all, given willingness to send tac nucs and Soviet troops? Presumably THEY were for Soviet purposes. (And US **ignorance** of the tac nucs fed the belief that the deployment was ONLY for SU strategic purposes, which looked ominous for Berlin, as well as lending themselves to the US cover story that they actually threatened the US.)

X Gribkov 169: 18 MRBMs (of 36 on Cuba) were "ready to be fueled and mated with their warheads by 28 October. Not one had been programmed for flight."

X Gribkov: the deployment of 40,000 troops was managed successfully (a first for SU), with "(mainly) successful camouflaging, counterintelligence and disinformation". OF TROOPS! Which should have been made known! While no camouflage of missile sites, once missiles had arrived!

X Gen. WY Smith: [contrary to him: SU and Castro were **right** to fear or even expect an American invasion of Cuba: Republican and congressional calls, Oct. 2 planning directive, exercises, deployments, Mongoose (see initial plans); (Note my ignorance of this even after 1965-67 with EGL in VN! Secrecy I wouldn't have believed possible; along with assassination efforts, again secret (and EGL).

X JCS assumed tac nuc warheads might be available for Lunas and "adopted contingency plans to respond to what they saw as the unlikely possibility [WRONG] that the Soviets would use such nuclear arms." 172. They knew weapons had no locks on them. They did not know there were 98 nuclear warheads [!!! Jesus Christ! One could ask: What were they thinking? If that was not a mantra with respect to both sides, and Israelis, Pakistanis, etc.] They didn't know that local commander had authority to use them, "in the early stages of the deployment," nor that this authority had been rescinded during the crisis. ?

X US saw Berlin and Cuba as two sides of the same coin; expected strong SU reaction in Berlin to attack on Cuba. [An OVER-rated deterrent; in this respect, K did take account of strategic imbalance, as I supposed; more than US did: see Nitze odds, and JFK on odds of SU "going all the way to nuclear war" [I.E. BERLIN! THAT's what he meant! That was wrong. Did it result from JFK misreading K's motives, and determination (which related to Cuba more than to strategic confrontations? Why, since he knew of Mongoose? Why did he underestimate K's willingness to settle for a no-invasion pledge? Perhaps because he was so impressed by the apparent recklessness of K's deceiving him and embarrassing him before the election

us. *Andrew McG*

*But JFK did recover his balance, appeared ready to swallow pride - though, and for blockade first*



[My hyp: What K meant was, "I won't disclose them before the election," exactly like Israeli assurance (to JFK! "We won't be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East," meaning, "We won't announce them or test them openly"! EXACTLY like K in Cuba! Was that about the same time?! And Israelis still deny or are ambiguous about the presence of nuclears in Israel! (See how close they came to using them in 1973, and even in 1967!) Like K on "defensive weapons": "policy of ambiguity." "We won't tell if you don't": "we won't embarrass you, or challenge you to respond"! Like Ike on U-2. (SU didn't announce its first nuclear test; it let us do it!) NVN was secretive about, and denied, presence of NVA in VN (lied to Lynd).

Did JFK think: K **wanted** not (only) to defend Cuba, but to humiliate me and make an attack in defense of Berlin look reckless; he wouldn't have hurt our relationship like this unless for bigger stakes. JFK was **certain** K would move on Turkey or Berlin if he attacked; he was wrong, LeMay was more right. (?)

N6

Smith: "For their part, Soviet officials have stated that they viewed Cuba and Berlin as separate and distinct issues with no close link between them." (Still, what were K's intentions toward Berlin in fall 1962? And were his mentions of Berlin privately before crisis meant to create a link between Cuba and Berlin in JFK's mind—as they did—or not?

Smith says no intention of "top" officials to invade. But how was that affected by the Soviet buildup, and the resulting Republican issue? Did it increase JFK's inclination to consider invading? Or diminish it (prior to discovery of missiles)?

From SU point of view, decision was made on the night of October 24/25 (Moscow time? <sup>Wed = blockade started?</sup> Same day that blockade went into effect) to remove the missiles; and that no one ever <sup>was - could</sup> intended to go to war over the missiles. Hence, "no danger of war, or of nuclear war" in actuality. BUT there was, in subsequent days! It was not certain that K would stop bargaining and offer or accept a no-invasion pledge as the sole basis of resolution **in time** to forestall a Cuban shutdown of a recon plane—the **FIRST one of which, along with the U-2 shutdown, could have and "should have", on the basis of JFK prior commitment! Led to widespread US attacks and invasion.** When did the US know of these, precisely, and when did Moscow know? If JFK had not backed down from his earlier commitment to the JCS (reflecting his own **earlier** determination not to go to war, not to lose control of negotiations-rather-than-war) the crisis would have blown up on Saturday, and the world some days later. (What could K have done to prevent attack on MRBMs once the US attacked all the SAMS and AA? What could he have done to prevent invasion following? <sup>too much!</sup>

And consider what invasion would have meant, just in Cuba! (Garthoff, according to Gribkov: 18,500 US casualties in first 18 days; but that's surely without even considering the presence of 40,000 SU troops, let alone 98 tac nuc warheads! And guerrilla war: JCS were hardly in a position to estimate the course of that accurately in 1962! Or 1961!) Granted, US/JFK overestimated certainty of this spreading to Berlin; but they totally



underestimated (maybe not so much, JFK) costs of war and possibility of nuclear war in Cuba itself! JCS on this: horse's asses. (Like Acheson). (Dillon? Ridge? McCon!)

(One count for Acheson, and JCS/LeMay: a surprise attack on Oct. 16-17 would have forestalled installation of warheads and even of missiles; and would not have led to attack on Berlin or Turkey. WHEN did warheads arrive, again? So they weren't so far off about the advantages of an attack IF it came right away, after discovery, as ExComm favored on first thought. But then, it would have been hard to demonstrate the very deployment under attack to the world, UNLESS they promptly invaded! And day by day, it got more dangerous than the JCS or ExComm foresaw.) Moreover, even by October 16, **the 40,000 Soviet troops were already ashore!**

sure,  
note to  
Oct-23



Friday, October 7, 2011

In some respects, aggressive initiatives were safer for each party than he knew.

(1) JFK was deterred from attacking by the prospect that if he attacked, Khrushchev was likely, indeed "certain," to respond with an attack on Turkey (or Italy!) or Berlin. Actually, Khrushchev didn't find either of these worth considering. (In this respect, LeMay and other Chiefs were right; the balance was such that this was very unlikely.

If JFK had known this, or agreed with the Chiefs...? "blow"

[Blair and Brenner: 265, n. 155. "Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov (*Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, pp. 260-61), provide an example of how Khrushchev resisted pressure to expand Soviet objectives during the crisis when the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister proposed using Berlin as a lever to end the confrontation. They quote the Soviet leader as responding: "We are here trying to get ourselves out of this *aventyura* [reckless gamble] {did K really call his own project a reckless gamble? That was what he was accused of when he was deposed} and now you are pulling us into another one."]

However, that was Khrushchev's perspective prior to any US attack, i.e. before any Soviet troops had actually been killed (or missiles destroyed). How he would have responded to his own military, or to his own impulses, after experiencing such losses... would be harder to predict. JFK could have been right. (Khrushchev could have woken up on October 22 to the news that an attack had taken place, or an invasion was underway; likewise, on October 28. Then what?)

X Interesting that JFK was so sure that the SU would react this way. Maybe he was projecting into them a knowledge of his own reluctance to initiate FU in Europe if they did attack in Turkey or Berlin; thus, he was wrongly foreseeing a willingness on their part to exploit their local conventional superiority in that area despite NATO threats of FU.

see his  
reluctance,  
in Berlin!

X (Burchinal complained that JFK just didn't take in and exploit the superiority that "the JCS had given him." Of course, JFK didn't find the consequences of the nuclear war they offered him as attractive as they did! Though they were right that Khrushchev was likely to back down from this threat, **just as JFK would** (and as even they would had they been in the position of the SU).

3 (2) Khrushchev did believe, most of the time, from October 22 on (and earlier) that JFK was reluctant to invade. (Or, wait a minute: wasn't the whole premise of the deployment that he was not? Or at least, that military and political forces in the US were forcing him in that direction? As K feared during the crisis.)

But he probably underrated this. JFK (and McNamara) was determined to avoid an attack or invasion. If Khrushchev had known this... the whole operation was safer for Khrushchev than it might have been: if someone other than JFK had been in charge. (Nixon!)



However, it really was true that military pressures combined with events (uncontrolled by Khrushchev (Cubans) or by JFK (SAC: U-2, Titan launch) could have overruled his reluctance.

3) I've long believed that Khrushchev was counting on JFK's maintaining silence about the MRBMs until after the election, even if he discovered them earlier. And I've believed this was not **entirely**, wildly, unrealistic. K himself had kept silent about the U-2 flights until he was able to shoot them down. And **JFK had kept silent about the actual, precise reality of the "missile gap" after September, 1961** (4 missiles! I didn't put this in the Gilpatric speech! Still, this worked in the opposite direction, from the **"MRBM gap," or the "missiles near one's shores non-gap, equality"**. } *to wrong*

Unless JFK was absolutely determined not to invade or attack—which he may have been (as McNamara claims, always!), though the October preparations don't support that, and in any case, Khrushchev could hardly be absolutely confident of that (if he had been, the "defending Cuba" rationale would have been pure hoax, to Cuba and the world, as the ExComm tended to assume, in ignorance of Mongoose)—then JFK would be virtually **compelled**, at the least, to take strong action (blockade at the least: which K was concerned to avoid: and it was going to remain a dangerous and effective option up until, as it worked out, October 23, before the election (though not so much, ironically, by October 24 when it actually went into effect; it prevented the IRBMs from arriving, but not the MRBMs, tac nucs, or warheads, or troops). Moreover, despite PSALM, it couldn't be prevented long from leaking (giving military incentives to leak). And if JFK was even somewhat, ambivalently, attracted to invading, this would give the perfect excuse for it, **precisely to win the election, before the election, not after!** (The attack, after all, would be popular—if JFK were ignorant of the 40,000 SU troops! **Why weren't they revealed, even before October 16? Clearly "defensive"!** Ideally, they could have been sent, and revealed, even before September 4, when JFK made his fatal public commitment!

What could the Soviets have done to forestall that commitment? (After all, JFK made it only to explain why he wasn't opposing the "defensive" buildup, not, he thought, to deter. Sorensen claimed he would not have threatened against less than a hundred missiles if he thought they were going to send a hundred! So...Bolshakov tells RFK privately that **they are going to defend Cuba with Soviet troops—40,000—and with tactical nuclear missiles! Or, they send these secretly—along with MRBMs, which they leave on ships in port, or hidden in port, not deployed on land, until the island has been secured from invasion—thus frustrating a US blockade. Then they announce their presence: before, or even after the September 4 JFK statement.**

That leaves an air attack the **only** option for the US when the MRBMs and IRBMs are finally unveiled. But to counter that threat, the Soviets could publicly challenge the right of the US to decide whether a Soviet "base" on the island is acceptable or not, pointing to US bases abroad. **The Soviet MRBMs and IRBMs, after all, were not there to counter Turkish missiles; they were there to counter US ICBMs (as a substitute for, or precursor to, Soviet ICBMs). They were just as "defensive"—or more properly,**



**"deterrent" —as any US weapons!** Their major purpose would be to deter a conventional attack on their ally: just like SAC and US tac nucs in Europe and Turkey! And they could have publicized their alliance with Cuba, just as Castro wanted!

Once the MRBMs were in Cuba, the only vulnerable period would be while they were actually being installed and made operational. A US air attack would have had to take out the SAMS and AA, as well, a large attack: which would not be sure to get them all (if there was some uncertainty whether some had been installed already, or remained hidden).

Question: Was JFK **really** tempted to attack on October 16, as so many others were? Might that have persisted for a day or two, long enough to get it underway? It almost surely **would** have destroyed the missiles ("most of them") and would have remained limited to Cuba. However, the Soviet troops would have meant a BIG battle, followed by an endless guerrilla struggle (including Soviet troops!) So the JCS/ExComm ignorance of those meant that the Soviets had neglected a **major** deterrent!

Contrary to these potentials for "safe" attack, note that the situation involved precedents of "crazy" premises:

--K's belief that the missiles could be hidden "by palm trees" from overhead surveillance (and the failure of local troops to camouflage, until late). (Someone in CIA, explaining their failure to predict the deployment, said "the error was Khrushchev's").

[see Blight and Brenner, p. 168, n.14. "Soviet military experts [sic] had calculated that the missiles could be camouflaged by the 'dense palm tree forests' in Cuba. In fact, palm trees do not grow in dense forests, and Cuban palm trees bear little resemblance to Soviet missiles."

--Castro's willingness to "go down in flames, with total annihilation" (of the world, not only the Cubans) rather than submit to occupation.

--Perhaps, K's belief that if JFK discovered the missiles, he would conceal it before the election. (He might have wanted to—if he didn't want to attack (see Nitze and Rusk initial reaction, which is what Khrushchev expected, exactly!)—but he couldn't conceal, and couldn't refrain from response, especially after September 4: did K reconsider tactics or project after Sept. 4? **Or was his response "irrational"?** (CHECK)

--the Strangelove perplex: failure to declare any of the deterrent capabilities actually installed, including failures of control; and the actual deployment of tac nuc warheads and readiness to use them, even delegation of control (before Oct. 22) (or for that matter, MRBM warheads, outside SU!) (as crazy as our doing the same, say for Germans or Turks).



--(Not crazy, but wrong: uncertainty about presence of warheads; assumption of K total control of Cubans and his own officers/warheads; over-estimate of each other's readiness to escalate; ExComm ignorance of SU motivations (K "aggressiveness"), Mongoose; beliefs that Fomin spoke for K, or that JFK was about to announce attack on Oct. 28, 9AM

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